TANF/FS/MA Workforce Retention Study
DWD/DWS/BPS Partner Training Section

Project Progress Update
February 20, 2003

Project Overview
In recent years, growing concern over increasing employee turnover has been expressed by both the Income Maintenance Advisory Committee (IMAC) and W-2 C& I (W-2 Contract and Implementation) Committee. Both committees expressed interest and support in conducting an Employee Retention study that would recommend strategies to increase employee retention.

The goal of this study is to identify the factors related to the exodus of workers from local agencies and recommend strategies to reduce worker turnover.

Expected Research Outcomes
The current research has five expected outcomes.

1. Analysis and statistical breakdown of reasons why workers stay employed in their agencies or leave.
2. Establishment and maintenance of statistics relating to statewide worker retention rate, including a base number of existing W-2 and IM positions. The dataset containing the statistics would include a breakdown of worker retention by county and/or agency.
3. Report of current conditions, with proposed strategies to increase the worker retention rate.
4. Implementation of strategies to improve the worker retention rate.
5. Evaluation of the project's success.

Research Method
The research method consists of a series of four activities, each of which builds upon the previous activity.

Literature Search
Initially, a search of the relevant academic and government literature regarding the topic of workforce retention in social service agencies was conducted. The results revealed dozens of relevant articles detailing research conducted over the past 30 years. The process of article retrieval and review is currently underway. The importance of this activity is that it will provide a basis for conducting the subsequent research activities as well as indicate areas of inquiry and possible analytic techniques to be used in the data collection and analysis phases of the research.

Workforce Retention Statistics

The second phase of the research involved soliciting feedback from the 93 agencies and counties administering W-2 and IM programs. The feedback involved workforce and retention statistics over a five-year period (FY 1998 through FY 2002), and was solicited directly from each agency's administrator. Of the 98 agencies/counties contacted, 63 responded (a 64% response rate).

The project team asked for the following information.
- Total number of positions.
- Number of workers leaving and hired (by fiscal year) for the following position types:
  - IM workers
  - W-2 workers
  - WIA workers
  - General workers

The table on the following two pages summarizes the results of the worker turnover information. The results indicate that for many counties and agencies, IM and W-2 turnover is not an issue.
- 34 of the 68 counties/agencies reported no turnover in IM positions during the five fiscal years studied.
- 58 responding counties/agencies reported being either a W-2 or both a W-2 and IM agency. Among these, 52 (90%) indicated they had experienced no W-2 worker turnover during the five year period.

However, several agencies did report statistics that should be cause for alarm.
- 20 counties/agencies reported IM worker turnover of equal to or greater than 25% over the five-year period.
  - Nine counties/agencies had IM turnover of 50% or greater.

Obviously, workforce retention is an issue in some areas.

Workforce Retention Project
Average Turnover Rates (%) by Position Type, FY1998-FY2002

For Counties/Agencies Reporting as of 1/24/03

Sorted Ascending by IM 5-year turnover rate

Agency	IM	W2	WIA	General
ACS (Waukesha County)	0.0%	4.5%	22.7%	0.0%
Ashland County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Bayfield County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%
Brown County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	42.1%
Burnett County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%
Calumet County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%
Crawford County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Door County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Forward Service Corp - Northern Consortium	0.0%	57.1%	9.5%	0.0%
Forward Service Corp (Florence)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Forward Service Corporation (Kewaunee County)	0.0%	160.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Forward Service Corporation (Waushara County)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Green Lake County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Iowa County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%
Iron County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Kaiser Group, Inc. (Walworth County)	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kenosha County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.6%
Marquette County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maximus (Milwaukee Region 6)	0.0%	27.0%	0.0%	73.0%
Oconto County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
OIC of Greater Milwaukee (Region 3)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ozaukee County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%
Pepin County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pierce County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sawyer County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Shawano County Job Center, Inc	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	60.1%
Sheboygan County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
St Croix County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%
Taylor County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Trempealeau County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
UMOS (Milwaukee Regions 2 and 5)	0.0%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vernon County	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Workforce Connections, Inc (Columbia County)	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Racine County	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%

Workforce Retention Project
Average Turnover Rates (%) by Position Type, FY1998-FY2002
For Counties/Agencies Reporting as of 1/24/03

Sorted Ascending by IM 5-year turnover rate

Agency	IM	W2	WIA	General
Jefferson County	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%
Columbia County	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Dunn County	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Marathon County DSS	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wood County	13.4%	0.0%	0.0%	13.4%
Portage County	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Rock County	21.6%	0.0%	0.0%	25.5%
Winnebago County	22.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Grant County DSS and W-2 Southwest Consortium	25.0%	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%
Polk County	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Price County	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dane County	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Dodge County	27.8%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Kewaunee County	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Marinette County	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%
Outagamie County	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Washington County	36.8%	0.0%	0.0%	15.8%
Jackson County	46.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Waupaca County	47.1%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
Buffalo County	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Juneau County	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lafayette County	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Oneida County	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Menominee County	57.1%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Milwaukee County	58.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fond du Lac County	64.0%	0.0%	0.0%	44.0%
Waukesha County	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians DSS	166.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Average 5-year Turnover Rate	**17.2%**	**5.9%**	**1.4%**	**13.7%**

Worker Interviews

The third research step involves conducting a number of telephone interviews of current W-2 and IM workers across the state. The workers selected for the interviews will be a sample of workers who have completed DWD IM and W-2 New Worker training during the past five years. Lists of workers haven taken training will be extracted from the Registrar system. Once extracted, the workers will be identified by county/agency. A sampling plan will be developed that will include workers from counties/agencies having low, medium and high levels of worker turnover, as well as geographic diversity, to ensure a fairly representative sampling of workers.

The purpose of the interviews will be to gather first-hand, or primary, information regarding workplace issues and reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the workers' current employment. The interviews will be primarily open-ended, with the interviewer conducting the interviews by telephone. The interview data will be transcribed into a word-processing document for analysis.

The goal of the interviews is to provide dimensions of workplace dynamics that can be translated into questions for a written survey.

Survey

Upon completion of the interviews and their analysis, a written survey will be developed for distribution to workers in the various counties/agencies. While the actual survey has yet to be developed, it is likely to include a number of scaled-response questions regarding workplace, training, and related issues. At this time, it is not known how many surveys will be distributed, but the file extract being supplied by the Registrar system will provide some direction.

Once completed, data from the surveys will be and analyzed. The goal of the analysis will be to identify those factors, which contribute to a high likelihood of a worker seeking employment elsewhere. This will be accomplished through use of a probability-based statistical technique (of which there are several) comparing the responses of those working in high versus medium versus low turnover agencies. Common factors related to worker turnover will be identified among the agencies showing historically similar turnover patterns.

Timeframe

The following timeframe is envisioned for the completion of the steps detailed above.

- Interview phase
    - o Initiate by March 3.
    - o Complete by March 21
    - o Analysis completed by April 7.

- Surveying phase
    - o Initiate by April 21
    - o Data collection completed by May 19.
    - o Report/analysis completed by June 13.